

# In the World of Music and Musicians

## Some of the Ameities Of Newspaper Criticism

The Vapid Venom of Anonymous Correspondents; Making a Bill of Particulars More Specific; Good and Ill Tempered Faultfinding

By H. E. Krehbiel

We have had ample occasion during an experience of nearly half a century as a reviewer of musical affairs for daily newspapers to learn about all there is to be learned, we fancy, touching the pains and penalties incident to the profession. Within the last few days we have been permitted also to enjoy some of the rewards outside of those which have always been ours, chief of which we count to be an untold conscience. Of necessity so long an experience has brought with it observation of many changes, the most striking of them being a vast output in musical offerings. The phrase sounds commercial or industrial and we would have preferred to say a vast growth in musical appreciation, as we should have done were we able confidently to assert that the growth in culture has kept pace with the opportunities for its attainment which have offered themselves. The relationship between the two phenomena is not our concern at present. In one thing there has been no change for half a century. We shall venture no word upon the half century preceding the last, or the centuries preceding that, for we fancy the experience of which we are speaking was paralleled when the first newspaper reviewer discussed the doings of the first singer, violinist, pianist, harpsichordist, dancer, pugilist or acrobat. Whether he wrote in praise or dispraise was a matter of indifference—somebody yielded to natural derelict or the itch for writing and damned the reviewer for not holding the same view with him. To hold such views was, of course, an impossibility, because the promptings were different.

### Anonymous Expressions Of Animosity

We are speaking of the majority of the critics' critics—the rule which letters to the editor, or to the critic himself. It happens that occasionally a sincere art lover has a desire to ease his mind of haunting thoughts or theories and does so in a manner that is good for popular enlightenment. We shall cite such a case presently; but in general the motive of the writer is animosity toward or friendship for the person criticized, and whether the critic is lauded, condemned or has held aloft the scales of discriminative analysis, he finds himself between the paper and the nether millstone.

All this is so elementary that we accompany it with an apology. We write the prelude only to introduce the theme on which it is always possible to make variations. But as a preliminary passage it may be said that we know of nothing so entirely wasted as the efforts to hurt the feelings of a critic. Unless he is extremely young in his profession he has learned to accept insults with the contemptuous good nature with which experience has banished him. They are always cowardly because they are always anonymous. If their writers felt that they were in danger of having their faces slapped as they deserved, they would not write them. Being an undecipherable few among millions they feel safe. They are safe, for even when their letters reach the critics, which is not always the case, they are read with a smile, consigned to the convenient waste basket and forgotten. They are the too ordinary incidents of a critic's life to occupy his attention. It has been the custom of The Tribune's music reviewer, or reporter, or critic (if you will), however, in matters which have seemed to him worth while to learn, if possible, the identity of his critics and to give their letters personal and, we hope, courteous attention. In this effort he has generally been thwarted. How? Let us give a concrete example, because it is illustrative of the propositions which we have advanced.

### Fictitious Signatures and False Addresses

When, some weeks ago, the columns of the newspapers were filled with stories of a disagreement between the general manager of the Chicago Opera Company and the threatened departure of Miss Farrar and a tenor, The Tribune's reviewer, in condemnation of the hullabaloo about this and kindred matters, said that music lovers might justly be concerned about other things; that they would "overlook a story of the flight of a dozen songbirds from their gilded cage if they could catch a glimpse at a paragraph stating that the next week's opera list would consist of 'Falstaff,' 'Die Meistersinger,' 'Fidelio,' 'Don Giovanni' and 'Guillaume Tell'—or perhaps a novelty by Berlioz." He also intimated that it was a matter of small moment "whether or not the Metropolitan audiences would next year have the inestimable privilege of seeing Miss Farrar in the guise of Zaza

disrobe with the assistance of a tenor and sprinkle her undergarments with perfume in expectation of his arrival in her dressing room." That seemed to us well within the province of art criticism. Letters came to the office at once—one a day for half a dozen days. It is interesting, if not significant, that they were all in a perfectly obvious feminine handwriting, and that only one or two showed evidence of an attempt at disguise. There were signatures to all and addresses. We thought it worth while to attempt to identify the writer or writers in accordance with our custom. Every signature and every address proved to be fictitious. Women are brave, but this woman, or these women, were too cowardly to permit the public to know that they approved of Miss Farrar's disgusting stage conduct; but they would not resist their desire to, as they hoped, wound the feelings of the reviewer. For seeking to preserve the respect of their acquaintances by concealing their identity they are entitled to this praise which we give them. But why did they ignore the obvious, and we think justifiable, criticism of the popular and managerial attitude toward opera as a cultural form of art?

### A Critic's Critic Provided With Evidence

The Metropolitan season came to an end and as usual was reviewed in The Tribune by this writer, who spoke in a necessarily hurried manner of two of its incidents—the death of Caruso and the resignation of Miss Farrar. On the latter point, after saying that other artists greater or equally great had gone from our opera without creating an irreparable loss, we observed: "She (Miss Farrar) leaves behind her a record of which all lovers of opera may well be proud, but also one which has its deplorable features. Those who appreciate most intelligently and keenly what her good instincts and fine talents prompted her to do in such operas as 'Königskinder' and 'Madama Butterfly' will regret that other promptings led her to do what she did long ago in 'Romeo et Juliette,' 'Faust,' 'Thais' and more recently in 'Zaza.' Some of them, while inclined to forgive, will find it hard to forget her utterances in Berlin when Germany projected the war, which has all but left the civilized world in ruins." There were also a few observations on the possible promptings to her step in the fact that a new singer had been successful in a role of which she had never enjoyed a monopoly.

This called out only one letter. It was signed and signature and address were obviously genuine. Moreover, it was written by a man, but it was addressed to the writer personally and not to the editor of The Tribune. Pursuing our custom we wrote to the writer and asked him whether it was intended for The Tribune's reviewer as such or was merely an attempt to be personally insulting. There came no reply. After ten days or a fortnight we wrote again, with the same result. Obviously our letters had reached their destination, for they were not returned. Having indicated that we now felt justified in making the letter public, we do so. But the author has made himself personally negligent, and we use his letter simply because it affords an opportunity to explain the points on which the writer and possibly a few others of his intellectual caliber may be in the dark, or inspired by like sentiments of personal animosity and narrow mindedness.

"April 23.  
"Mr. H. E. Krehbiel,  
"New York Tribune.

"It seems rather a shame that a large newspaper with an intelligent following should print the personal spleen of people employed by it to 'criticize' music and the other arts. The reviewer of opera season has no particular value, but it becomes something offensive when it contains a paragraph like the one about Miss Farrar's career at the Metropolitan. Only a dotard would have unearthed at this particular moment her supposed utterances in Germany at the outbreak of the European war. You may remember her in the role of Zaza. Essaying new roles and careers, perhaps, has evidently come to be considered by you as something deplorable. Which of the imports at the Metropolitan is capable of sustaining a career of sixteen years? 'Are in principal roles. Your 'young' Austrian artist, par example? Your placing this young Austrian in juxtaposition to the old, faded, retiring, disconcerted American woman is ludicrous in the extreme. I have an English friend, now in Cape Town because of his physical condition, and feeling voiceless, who sang with said Austrian prodigy, who Vienna between fifteen and sixteen years ago, and he recently expressed this brand of surprise and amusement over her being the debutante wonder of this season.

"Your old line of criticism has been the comparing of every singer of our day with the truly great of sixty or seventy years ago. Since few are old enough to dispute the talent of the stars of three or five generations back, this brand of criticism has not by any means something very new, and there are many glibly souls who cordially dislike everything contemporaneous because you tell them how bad it all is. How sad, indeed, you could not have passed on with the immortals you so well remember!

"Miss Farrar and the rest of the poor multitude you so ruthlessly touch with your scolding pen should indeed, bow their heads in abject shame over the meagerness of their attainments when considered in the light of all you have done in your very long lifetime. That is, of course, I take it, for granted you are an avant-garde, and that you have scores of truly great achievements to your everlasting credit. The editor of your paper, young people from wasting their time and energy in this manner I wish you would

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print on the great, full pages assigned to you a tabulated list of your ouevres, at the same time answering the question which lurks in many of our minds, "By what divine right are critics?"

Let us take up the writer's "points" and dispose of them as summarily as possible. Like the multitude of those who write to the newspapers to air their grievances or vent their spleen, our correspondent is at a loss to understand why this journal employs such a man as it does as a reviewer. Obviously editors do not feel their conduct to be as shameless or reprehensible as the correspondents who know so much more about their business than they do.

Secondly, one is not necessarily a dotard who recalls Miss Farrar's pro-German sympathies in time of national trial. Before the war she said in a German newspaper that she would not return to America for the reason that there was no art in the country—"nothing but money." "For that," she continued, "I went over. For that all go over. The American has no appreciation of art. . . . Art is an impossibility in a country politically corrupt." Similar sentiments she expressed in an interview published in "The Times" newspaper. After the outbreak of hostilities, we think, but are willing to be corrected if wrong, German singers were dismissed from the Metropolitan Company for less; yet the Tribune's reviewer did not permit the fact to influence his opinion of Miss Farrar's artistic merits. He does not now.

Third—"The deplorable things in her career" were not her failures in some of her undertakings. In fact, there were amazingly few of such failures. We thought we had made our reference plain by specifying certain performances. If we did not, we say now, as we said at the time when the occasion called for it, that we think it was an inexcusable act of vulgarity on the part of Miss Farrar to sing a scene in "Romeo et Juliette" rolling about in a bed. In a laudatory review of Miss Farrar's career Mr. Henderson recalled that exhibition and did not attempt to extenuate it, though he said that bedroom scenes are more familiar now than they were then. So they are—in the theaters and movies. They are signs of depraved tastes there; they are more so in operas in which the authors did not contemplate that they should be injected. Goethe's Gretchen talks over an assignation with Faust and accepts from him quite as a matter of course the sleeping draught for her mother. The Marguerite of Barbier, Carré and Gounod throws herself into Faust's arms in a moment of passionate ecstasy. When Miss Farrar came to us from Berlin she brought a new nuance into the scene. After proclaiming her exaltation at the thought of Faust's love, the emotion surging within her along with the song of birds, the murmur of the breeze and all the voices of nature, she fell back into the gloom when Faust was about to take her into his arms and—opened a back door to him! The net may have seemed dramatically apt to her; but it was inartistic because antagonistic to the wishes of the authors. However, she did not persist in the vulgarity. Nothing need be added to what we have said of "Zaza."

Fourth—"The opinions of an Englishman living in Cape Town concerning Mme. Jettiza have nothing to do with the case. Neither have ours. The question is one of Miss Farrar's artistic conduct, not of Mme. Jettiza's or abilities.

Fifth—"We do not remember the singers of seventy years ago; nor have we compared any of to-day's artists with those of five generations ago. It is of our correspondent's splenetic and unkind to wish that we were dead because of things we never did. Also it seems to us naughty, if not positively wicked.

order to say whether or not an omelette is savory. (A silly pun, which will lead smart Alecks to suspect our French, but the provocation deserves nothing better.) Finally, critics do not exist by divine right. God tolerates them in His infinite and inscrutable goodness, as He does such pitiable specimens of humanity as our correspondent.

### Criticism Dispassionately Criticized

But we have promised to give the floor to a speaker of a different stripe. Some weeks ago we received a letter from Celeste D. Bates, of Hollis, L. I., expressing some surprise that the work of a certain orchestral conductor had not been more severely handled. We showed the lady our customary courtesy and received her consent to print her letter. This we do with a sense that we have received a kindness.

"If critics are supposed, as you say, to have no right to emotions, some of the multitude sometimes choke for lack of opportunity to express our feelings. May I present my case as one of the many?"

"I am a musician—a pianist. Incidentally have written music criticism. (For 'The Cleveland Plain Dealer'), book reviews, etc. I find myself after a lifetime of study and observation with a fairly well developed sense of discrimination and appreciation; in terse language I am what I call a musical 'snob.' The best is none too good for me. I take it where I find it. I need not mention where I found it, in an orchestra of guest conductors. What were we left with after the debacle of the Boston Orchestra? Rebaud, as conductor, won a success of a kind. Has Montoux obtained better results? He has. We have had Stravinsky until he has become almost as much of an institution as Damrosch. A brief review of Bodansky, with a new and unlicked body of music, and a new set of conductors—shooting stars. Then Mengelberg, with the first signs of a real enthusiasm, of few years in any one since Damrosch. Whether or not his methods place him invariably on the highest artistic eminence, he achieves results that make the public sit up (I might say, wake up). I heard one contented spirit remark that Mengelberg lead an orchestra that he could lead. He is, at least, on fire with an idea, and he communicates it. Like yourself, I am tired of the conductors and the musical director who have let us on. The consequence is I am hearing less and less music. I have clung to my Boston Symphony subscriptions in the vain hope that a new star might shoot across its horizon, but so far the prospects are indefinite, and I have finally canceled both subscriptions.

But where do I find support for my contented spirit? As you could neither lead nor follow, I am crowded for performances good, bad or indifferent. There seems to be no accepted standard—no 'Thou shalt not' of the music world. The papers (five of them) for the opinions of the high priests, and I find in them what impresses me as so non-committal and 'let them down easy' a policy that I can find in that direction no dawn of a possible awakening, or a raising of the powers that be, of those concerned in purveying music to us. Is the management, seeing that the public doesn't know better or doesn't care, complacently follow a convenient laissez-faire policy, emulating Barak in his well known opinion of the public? As for music, outside of the orchestral offerings, is not the poor attendance at many of the concerts accountable for, perhaps, on the grounds that most people are frightened by the many excursions into other fields?

I am speaking of the many—not the few with more money than love of music. My solution of the problem is simple. The public be damned or the public be taught. Having personally richly benefited by technical criticism and comparison, I prefer it to the more general style of a review. It is what I instinctively look to for information or for support. I have the deepest respect and admiration for the great writers who lead our thought in musical matters, but I cannot help wishing that they would allow themselves more freedom in the expression of their personal opinions. It seems to me that it would lead to the establishment of a more definite and definite understanding of the musical principles underlying the performance of works of art and to an enlightenment, however gradual, that would bring about an ultimate demand for and support of the best and legitimate only in music."

## Philharmonic's 31st Season Will Open On October 26

Willem Mengelberg, the Philharmonic guest conductor, who will shortly sail for Holland, will return to the Philharmonic for the first concert in the society's Metropolitan Opera House series on January 30. The Philharmonic's eighty-first season will open with the Thursday evening performance on October 26 under Stravinsky.

Henry Hadley, associate conductor of the Philharmonic, will conduct the orchestra at the Stadium concerts during the summer, sharing the series with Mr. Van Hoogstraaten. During the summer Mr. Hadley expects to devote a large part of the time when he is not conducting in rehearsals and concerts to the examination of American manuscripts. The Philharmonic Society hopes to be able to offer a considerable number of works by native composers in its next season in increase over former seasons.

The Philharmonic prospectus for the eighty-first season will be issued shortly and will present the society's concert schedule and the names of the assisting artists who will appear with the orchestra during the season. Although no advance announcements have been published, subscription renewals for the coming season have already been received in large numbers.

New subscriptions and renewals are accepted at the Philharmonic office at Carnegie Hall for the Brooklyn Academy and Metropolitan Opera House series, as well as for those at Carnegie Hall. Information may also be obtained at the same place concerning the activities of the advisory board and its special work for the society in the educational field and concerning membership in the Philharmonic Society.

### Music Notes

The Russian Opera Company will begin a second week to-morrow evening. The repertoire will be as follows: Monday, "Eugen Onegin"; Tuesday, "Demetrius"; Wednesday, "Carmen"; Thursday, "Siegfried"; Friday, "Boris Godunov"; Saturday matinee, "Eugen Onegin"; Saturday night, "Pique Dame."

Samuel A. Baldwin will play the following programs at his free organ recitals at the City College this week: SUNDAY AT 4 P. M. Variations on a Beethoven theme (MSS.). Elégie (Schubert). Thayer Prelude and Fugue in B minor. Bach Legend in A Norwegian Village (Chopin). Large, "New World" Symphony (Dvorak). Overture, "Mantred" (Schumann). WEDNESDAY AT 4 P. M. Overture, "Occasional Oratorio" (Handel). Andante con moto, Fifth Symphony (Beethoven). Fantasia and Fugue in G minor (Bach). Extravaganza (Schubert). Brahms Scherzo in G minor. Mendelssohn Spring Song. Mendelssohn Suite (Gothic).

Four young women and one man were each given the award of artists' diploma at the Institute of Musical Art this last week by juries composed of leading musicians of the country. Miss J. Nora Fauchald, soprano; William Kroll, violinist; and Margaret Hamilton, Anna Blumenfeld and Dorsey Whittington, pianists, were pronounced by the juries to be not only thoroughly trained musicians, but sufficiently endowed with natural talent to justify the dedicating of their lives to concert work. The juries were composed of Jascha Heifetz, David Mannes, William J. Henderson, Frank La Forge, Joseph Lhevinne, Rudolph Goldmark and Mischa Levitzki.

place at the 13th Regiment Armory, Brooklyn, May 28, 29 and 30, that a trifle over 6,000 singers will participate in the male choruses that will form the principal events of the celebration. This representation will be made up of delegations from Manhattan, the Bronx, Brooklyn, Jersey City, Hudson County, Camden, N. J., Baltimore, Philadelphia, Perth Amboy, Lancaster, Pa., Elizabeth, N. J., Washington, D. C., and various Connecticut communities. Dr. Felix Jaeger is in charge of the musical arrangements and will conduct the choruses. Mmes. Claire Dux and Johanna Gadske have been engaged as soloists.

The celebration is under the auspices of the United Singers of Brooklyn, a branch of the Northeastern Federation, and the organization securing first prize in the singing contests will there by earn the privilege of entertaining the Federation's singers at the next event in 1925.

### Goldman Concerts Announced

The Goldman Band, under the direction of Edwin Franko Goldman, will give more than sixty concerts this summer, and the following schedule has been definitely arranged. There will be forty-two concerts on the green at Columbia University. The season starts on June 12 and ends on September 8. During the first nine weeks concerts will be given on Monday, Wednesday and Friday evenings, and during the last three weeks concerts will be given five nights a week—Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday evenings. In addition to the concerts on the green at Columbia, sixteen free concerts will be given on Tuesday and Thursday evenings at 8 p. m. in the various parks and institutions of the city as follows: June 13, City Hall (noon); 15, Prospect Park (Brooklyn); 20, Montefiore Home; 22, Central Park; 23, Prospect Park (Brooklyn); July 4, Poe Park (Bronx); 6, Central Park; 11, Richmond Hill (Queens); 13, Prospect Park (Brooklyn); 20, Central Park; 25, Seamen's Institute (Jeannette Park); 27, Prospect Park (Brooklyn); August 1, Prospect Park (Brooklyn); 3, Central Park; 8, Central Park; 10, Prospect Park (Brooklyn). There will be two private concerts in the gymnasium of Columbia University for subscribers only. For the concerts at Columbia University admission tickets are required. These tickets are free and may be had upon written request to "Summer Concerts," Columbia University, New York City. A self-addressed, stamped envelope must be inclosed with the request. No tickets are required for the park concerts.

**Friends of Music**  
The Society of the Friends of Music announces that during the season of 1922-23 it will give a series of six subscription concerts, five of these at the Town Hall on Sunday afternoons at 3:30 o'clock, and one on Wednesday afternoon, January 31, at Carnegie Hall.  
The society has decided on this reduction in the number of its concerts owing to the present over-production of music in this city, and because it wishes, through concentration, to emphasize the work of the chorus. The concerts will be under the direction of Mr. Arthur Bodansky. The list of assisting artists includes Mr. Charles Cahier, Mr. Sigmund Olegin, Messrs. Bronislav Huberman, Harold Bauer, Pablo Casals and Arthur Schnabel.  
The concerts will be given on the following dates: November 26, December 21, January 14 and 31, February 20 and March 25.

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## English Dancing Teacher Makes Third Visit to America

Originator of Ensemble System Has Trained More Than 25,000 Girls During Forty Years' Experience

John Tiller, probably the leading English teacher of stage dancing and the originator of the system of ensemble dancing in which selected groups of girls are trained as a unit, is in America for a short visit, his third trip to America in more than twenty years. Mr. Tiller came to America when Oscar Hammerstein was at the Olympia to bring over the first "pony ballet" ever seen in America, and he did not revisit America until last fall, when he brought over the Sixteen Sunshine Girls, who are appearing in "Good Morning, Dearie" at the Globe Theater. His present trip is to visit the Sixteen Sunshine Girls and the London Palace Girls, another Tiller troupe, who are with Fred Stone on tour in "Tip Top," Charles Dillingham's musical comedy, seen in New York last season, and to confer with F. Ziegfeld Jr. about several novelties which are to be introduced in "The Follies."

Mr. Tiller has been training dancers for more than forty years and in that time has turned out more than 25,000 dancing girls. Tiller began his career as a merchant in Manchester, and did his first work training a troupe of boys for a church fair in Manchester. He conceived the idea of training dancing girls, and became so successful that he abandoned his career as a merchant altogether.

A system of training based upon the theory that children must learn to dance as they learn to read has been developed by Mr. Tiller. He originally took girls at the age of eight, nine and ten years and taught them at his school in Manchester, the girls coming to him at stated times in much the same way as they went to regular schools. The British law now fixes twelve as the minimum age at which girls may be taken for training, and a class of seventy-two girls of this age was taken last autumn at Manchester. The training of late years has been largely in charge of Mrs. Tiller, to whom Mr. Tiller attributes much of his success. Children are apprenticed to him in the first instance, but after serving their apprenticeships may leave his troupe at any time. The girls are trained for three or four years before they ever make a public appearance, and that first appearance is generally in an annual summer show which Mr. Tiller produces at Blackpool. Then the girls are formed into troupes, given a number and sent out.

From the beginning of their training, one member of each Tiller troupe is taught to be the leader of the troupe, with the result that Tiller troupes are complete organizations in themselves. Miss Mary Read, for instance, who dances with the Sunshine Girls at the Globe Theater, has full charge of the organization, transacts its business, looks after the living conditions and welfare of her dancers and is responsible only to Mr. Tiller. Tiller dancers begin their training by learning how to march. Two or three months at the beginning of the training are consumed in teaching the child to march. Then comes a set program

of steps which through years of experience has been as carefully worked out as a system of finger exercises for piano. The exercises become so difficult as the training advances that at the end of the first year the girls are learning their first real dance steps. As a result of long training and association together Tiller dancers develop a real esprit de corps. The fact that they are Tiller girls is a matter of pride. Zena Dore, a Tiller dancer, is married to a British nobleman, according to Mr. Tiller they stay married, and he has never known a separation or a divorce.

Of late years Mr. Tiller has cut down the number of girls taken for training and has begun to specialize more with his established troupe. Besides the organizations now in America he has a troupe of sixteen and a special troupe of eight children in the Folies Bergere in Paris, this troupe replacing the Sunshine Girls, who came to America after a Paris engagement, while another troupe is appearing in London with Sir Harry Lauder. Several troupes are on tour in England and on the Continent, but Tiller troupes in other years have gone all over the world, even into India and Australia.

Mr. Tiller is the author of the present British law which makes it impossible to take dancing or other performing children out of England unless in charge of a responsible person and then only under a heavy bond to insure their return to England in case of stranding. Mr. Tiller began an agitation for such a law several years ago after he saw children belonging to another troupe stranded in Paris, and the law was eventually passed in the form which he recommended.

### Author and Actress Is Leah Baird

Leah Baird, the Associated Exhibitors star, is the author of "Don't Doubt Your Wife," her picture which was released recently, and "When the Devil Drives," which has just been finished. She believes she can best interpret a character that she herself has created and depicts situations that she has devised. She is not backward about selecting unsympathetic roles for herself. In "When the Devil Drives" she plays an adventuress.

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